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Dolls for the promotion of
fertility as used by some
of the Nguni tribes and
the Basuto

Working through the Ethnological specimens at the East London Museum, I was particularly intrigued by the collection of symbolic dolls, indicative of the little known customs of the tribal woman. It would be interesting to know how general these practices are among the tribes of Southern Africa. Unfortunately these dolls are not easily procurable the women setting great store by them and unwilling even to sell them. Only the specimens in the East London Museum will be described.

I could find no references to certain types of fertility dolls in any of the books I consulted, and much of my information derives from descendants of old settler families who specialized in the ethnological material of that time. Also I found on enquiry that the old Bantu women still adhere to and religiously believe in the old customs. One reported to me thus "All these dolls are for the same thing and are called *onomgogwane*. When a little girl plays with ordinary dolls (*onopopu*) all the time, her mother knows it means she will have a large family. But as she grows up she cannot play with these dolls any longer, and the old woman makes her a special little doll (*Nomgogwane*) which she wears round her neck so that she will get married and have lots of children and good luck. This she wears until she is about to be married. A big doll is then made for her to carry in her arms and nurse, so that she will have lots of children". An old Galecka woman told me of the dolls, and her story was confirmed by an old Xhosa woman.

The keeping and making of symbolic dolls is a tradition conceived, organised, and perpetuated by the womenfolk alone, and reveals the dearest desires of a woman's heart since her advent upon the earth—to find a man who will love her, and to have children. This most primitive attempt to control nature, which is synonymous with sympathetic magic, has been perpetuated among the S.A. Bantu, but today these customs are almost obsolete.

Not all the tribes use the same means of ensuring many children, but all have one custom or another for this important function. The great importance of child-bearing is owing to the Bantu social system, where marriage is a contract between clans, so that the great thing is not the wife, but her reproductive capacity. A wife's social status is only acknowledged once she has children (13). In this paper three kinds of symbolic dolls are examined, all of which typify the primitive woman's rites. They are:

Love-Dolls,
Fertility Dolls, or Bride Dolls,



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Calling-the-baby Dolls, or Hut Dolls, and will be described respectively. I shall treat them in the order of their supposed magical influence on the lives of the Bantu women.

Love-Dolls

The young girl's dolls are not often made nowadays. As is the case with so many superstitious rites, this practice has all but died out. These are the little dolls which young girls wear around their necks, which could be called "love-dolls", as their first function is to attract a husband, though with the object of having children. "Their national customs appertaining to marriage also assist them towards attaining motherhood" (10). One of our specimens was collected in Basutoland, the other two are Xhosa, one being made by a Xhosa woman who was one of Krel's people. It seems to be a Xhosa custom.

Among the Bantu tribes a spinster is seldom heard of. This fact is largely due to polygamy, whereby a man may take to wife as many women as he can "lobola" or pay for, in as far as it is politic. For a man who takes many wives awakes envy, and is suspected of setting himself up as a rival to the chief in wealth, many wives signifying to the tribesmen many cattle, hence wealth (5, 6). But there is not "a single man in Kaffirland who does not hope and believe that he will live to marry three or four wives" (7). If a girl is not sought in marriage, her parents look for a son-in-law (4) or they may even present their daughter to a man already possessing wives, an offer which out of politeness he cannot refuse. In such a case the *ikhazi* (bride-price) received is below the normal value (10). A woman may divorce her husband, or run away, but pressure is always put on her to return to him. Thus there are few if any spinsters in the tribe. But the girls always hope to be sought in marriage, as this is the most respectable path to marriage (4). They wear a love-doll as a lucky talisman to ensure success in the form of an eligible husband and plenty of children. A woman's prestige lies mainly in the wealth of her husband and the number of her children.

If a young woman of 18 or 20 or even older, through misfortune has not succeeded in marriage, an old woman will give her a doll which the girl is then supposed to hang around her neck when she sleeps at night, or wear beneath her clothing. A string of beads is often specially made attached to the doll so that it can be used as a necklace. Girls are encouraged to wear these doll necklaces by the older women, in the belief that it encourages productivity, but if her main reason for wearing the charm is to find a husband, some degree of secrecy is in operation. It would be a matter for shame were it discovered that she was looking for a husband (4). It is a reproach among women to be told "You were spied for" meaning that your people searched for a husband for you, you were not sought in marriage (4). A bride is not supposed to marry willingly, a convention which is perpetuated in the wedding ceremony of some Nguni tribes where at one stage in the proceedings convention demands that she should try to run away. This unwillingness is as much a convention among the Bantu as the "radiantly smiling" brides of our civilisation.

Similar necklaces were seen in use about 10 years ago by young women at an *Intonjane* (girls' initiation) dance, not by the young *Intonjane* girls themselves, but by the marriageable girls (*amantombazana*). These are the older girls who had cut their hair and given away their old clothes when the older boys became *abakhwetha*. They now wear calf-length skirts and adopt a more elaborate doek. The clothing of the women, particularly the style of their head-dress, indicates their status.

The *Intonjane* is a young girl who is entering puberty, and is thus secluded for a period of several weeks. This is not a period of instruction, but various sacrifices are made for her. If a married woman did not have something killed for her, and ignored the custom prescribed for her entry into womanhood, her family has offended the ancestor spirits, and should she prove barren or fall sick, the witchdoctor (*igqira*) will advise her to go back to her father's



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

household and undergo the ceremony. This custom is believed to prepare a young woman for motherhood. Thus this is not so much an initiation rite as a fertility rite, for not all women become *intonjane* at puberty, although that is the proper time for the ceremony. This is the ancient Nguni fertility rite and established custom; the practise of having a doll may be a recent accretion for it has no effect on tribal life and was not noted by early writers.

Only certain Xhosa tribes have adopted the custom of Bride-Dolls, which is in reality a Basuto custom, entrenched in their tribal life and noted by European visitors. An interesting Fertility Doll is fig. 6 which is probably Thembu. The doll is similar to the Basuto dolls in conception, but is attached to a necklace, after the Nguni fashion.

The Love-Dolls at the East London Museum are all covered with beads, the oldest one dating back to 1907. If these dolls represent a comparatively late custom (a suggestion of the Bantu I queried) it leads to much speculation. The custom is certainly a symptom of sympathetic magic, and perhaps the idea was adapted from the Bride dolls of the Basuto. (By the end of the eighteenth century Sotho-Tswana tribes were occupying Basutoland, and some Basuto had infiltrated into the Griqualand East area, probably about the middle of the nineteenth century (1, 15). The idea is certainly an ancient one. However, it has been observed by modern ethnologists who have studied the urbanized natives in the locations (4) that old superstitious ideas are conveyed to town and forced into service for new needs under new conditions. Could it be that as young men left for European employment, sometimes for long periods, and as economic considerations (4) stultified polygamy, more young girls found themselves in danger of being left on the shelf? I find no reference to this custom among early writers. The tradition of "bead dolls" seems to be established. Were they ever made of any other material? Do they definitely post-date the introduction of glass beads into South Africa, and that, when a copious supply of regular European beads were available, probably since the eighteenth century? The beads used in the East London Museum specimens are for the most part tiny glass beads of vivid colour which are bought at trading stores, and are much in favour for beadwork because of their regular size. Within the last 50 years or so, the fashion in beads has changed. Formerly the beads used were larger and coarser, about 4 mm. in diameter, while the ones used nowadays are small, 2 mm. in diameter. The latter variety has been used in the manufacture of these dolls.

These love-dolls take various forms. Sometimes there are two dolls together, representing a man and a woman, instead of a single doll. The dolls may be merely symbols of human beings, so abstract as to be almost unrecognisable. Others are so carefully made that they are marvels of nimble fingerwork and detail and are true masterpieces in beadwork. It is a fact that sometimes a single doll is worn, while other necklaces have two dolls, evidently not supposed to represent two babies, but rather a man and a girl. I base my assumption on specimen 1365 (fig. 3) which was given to a young girl by an old Xhosa woman in order that she might find a husband. The dolls worn openly were the single ones. The double ones seem quite clearly meant to bring a man and a woman together. Specimen 1750 (fig. 2) is another double one, and so abstract that were it seen, it would hardly be suspected of representing a man and a woman. This endorses the story that these dolls were kept secret. The custom of the love-dolls seems to have a double purpose, and the stress laid on one or the other, determines the form the charm takes. Basically the charm is a good-luck talisman to bring the wearer "Health, Wealth and Happiness", condensed in Bantu opinion into one word "children".

The lack of information on this custom is probably due to the secretive nature thereof, and the fact that it is not a regularly repeated rite practised by the whole tribe. The fact that it is practised at individual whim, induces one to believe that it is a recent custom, without the full sanction of the tribe.

Specimen 1764 (fig. 1) was made in 1912 and consists of a roll of kaffir sheeting sewn

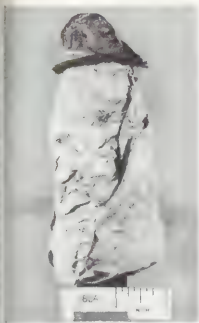


Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12

into a cylindrical shape. This is covered from the top almost to the bottom with beadwork coloured in barberpole fashion in strips of green and white, with between them a line of red, black, or yellow beads. Below this beadwork bodice hang streamers of blue beads, in pairs, tipped with green and white beads. On top of the beaded cylinder is a cloth knob, covered over with black velvet to form the head, and each eye is a tiny black bead sewn on top of a large white one. From each side of the neck emanates a double string of beads of alternate lengths of blue, white, and green beads with some black and white beads. One strand of this necklace is 6½ inches long, the other one is 10¾ inches long, the short one finishing off in a pearly button, the other in a bead loop, this serving as a fastener which is rather to one side of the necklace. The doll is almost totally stylized except for the head. This specimen was collected by Mrs. I. J. Church, a missionary.

Length of body	2 in.
Length of bead skirt	1½ in.
Length of bead bodice	1½ in.
Length of left-hand strand	10¾ in.
Length of right-hand strand	6½ in.
Total length of doll	3½ in.
Total length of necklace	11½ in.

Specimen 1750 (fig. 2), made in Basutoland in 1907 and collected by Mrs. I. J. Church, is wholly abstract in conception. The necklace itself consists of double strands of beads emanating from the upper sides of the pendant, and are of black and white beads with in parts, an admixture of pink beads. The pendant is a symbol of two people, a man and a woman. Two little cylinders of beadwork are made by twisting strings of black and white beads round and round each cylindrical core, each having green barberpole lines. They are joined at the top by a big flat black bead. There is a touch of pink in one doll. The cylinders are joined midway by a red bead. The tops of the cylinders under the flat black bead are covered with knobs of white and black beads, and hanging down from the top of each of these knobs are three strands of black and white beads, tipped with a green bead. Underneath each cylinder "bodice" is a big flat black bead, then a mass of blue ones and another flat black bead, forming a waist. Below the "waist" flare out many streamers of black and white beads with pink bead tips, which represent skirts. These symbols of humans are to all intents and purposes identical.

Length of necklace	11½ in.
Length of coiled body	1½ in.
Length of hair	1 in.
Length of skirt	2½ in.
Total length of necklace	15 in.
Total length of dolls	4 in.

Specimen 1365 (fig. 3) was made in recent years by a Xhosa woman for an unmarried girl and was collected by Mrs. W. F. Courtenay-Latimer. The two dolls are distinguishable as a man and a woman by the clothes they are wearing. They are joined by a pearly button behind, and are suspended on a small double loop of white beads, each end being attached to a figure by a button and bead-loop fastening at the back of the heads. Strands of beads also run from these buttons to the shoulders to secure them firmly together. The dolls are made out of wood covered with beadwork, and are similar in shape. The bodies are flat, shape being given by notches for a neck and a waist, and they have stick legs. The legs are not all in one with the body, but are firmly sewn onto the wooden body, thus are somewhat movable, particularly the woman's. As is usual, neither have arms. Both figures are completely covered with beadwork, white beads being used with black ones to mark the features of the face (hair, eyes, nose, mouth and ears) and for decorative lines and patterns on the bodies. The

heads are cloth knobs skilfully fixed onto the wooden bodies and covered with beadwork continuous with the beadwork on the bodies. From the woman's ears hang fine copper wire hoops as earrings. There is a black design on each chest: a black diamond shape with two white dots on the man, and a black hourglass shape on the woman, who is decorated similarly back and front. There are black lines and a diamond shape below the waist of the man, and a symbolic woman figure below the waist of the woman. (This woman figure is similar in style to figures found on a certain type of necklace used by Xhosa men. The native wearers say that these figures represent their wife or wives. Certain ways of representing the arms, legs or bodies, denote characteristics such as laziness, shrewishness, love of amusement, etc.) The woman's legs have bands of blue and black at the ankles and of pink and black at her knees. The man has one pink and black and one blue and black anklet, and has a blue and black parallelogram design on one leg. Both figures are hung around with bead necklaces and have skirts and other ornaments typical of their sex. Each figure has ornaments, probably denoting the many beaded cloth bags which men and women are fond of hanging about their persons, slung over their hips. These are blue straps of beads that emanate from the middle of their chests and backs, with short streamers hanging from the strap, white with blue and black touches. The woman has one such "sling-bag", the man has three, one with blue beads, the others just black and white. Around his waist the man wears a beadwork band, white with a black fleck design, from which hang short bead threads touched with blue to form a skirt probably intended to be an *umthika*, a sort of skirt of tails. At the open side is a pearly button from which a long tassel of white with black beads, each strand of which is tipped with a little tassel, falls to his feet. In all his bead finery he is a great gallant. The woman has a short blue fringe in the v-style, tipped with big black beads around the bottom of her beadwork body, which indicates she is wearing a skirt. The short skirt, as against an *inciyo* (thread apron) or a full-length skirt, shows her to be between childhood and adult status—in fact she is an *intombi*, a girl of marriageable age. She also has a waistband of black and white beads with small sections of the blue v-style fringe at each side of it, and a black and white bag ornament emanating from her waist.

Length of bead loop	3 in.
Length of woman doll	4½ in.
Length of man doll	5½ in.
Length of woman's legs	1 in.
Length of man's legs	1½ in.
Length of man's streamer necklace	3½ in.
Length of the bags	1 in.
Length of man's tassel	2 in.
Total length of dolls with loops	7½ in.

Bride Dolls

Like all Bantu nations the Basuto are extremely anxious to have children, and as they are considered in the light of wealth, the girls especially, they want as many as possible. A childless marriage is not considered a binding one and barrenness is considered as a great disgrace, thus the women are particularly anxious to have children (2). All Eastern Bantu tribes have some precautions which are supposed to ensure fertility: the seclusion of Xhosa and Pondo girls is an example. The Basuto women, when their marriage is imminent, are given a doll which symbolizes a baby. This custom, once universal among the Basuto, is now dying out, although I am told by Xhosa women that the custom is now occasionally practised by Xhosa and Fingo. This custom was noted by missionaries as early as 1833 when the Rev. E. Casalis evidently knew of the existence of this practise (2). However, he gives no description of it in his book on the Basuto. Now according to Casalis, before he

entered Basutoland with his co-missionaries, "none of the travellers who had been led by views of evangelisation or commerce beyond the Orange River, had deviated from the route marked out by the Rev. I Campbell" towards Bechuanaland, and Basutoland had never been visited by the white man (2). Thus we cannot expect reference to the Basuto's fertility dolls to precede 1833, and by 1923 the custom was already rare (1). Reference to this custom is rather fragmentary and conflicting in different reports of its existence, made when its popularity was already on the wane, and my explanation is augmented by accounts of Bantu women of today, and of reports made, though never set to paper, at the turn of the century. It was stated that a doll was made for a forthcoming wedding by the bride's grandmother or some other old woman of the kraal, and that at her wedding she carried this doll, showing that she wished to present her husband with children. The doll is thenceforth kept by the bride as her most precious possession until such time as she is blessed with a child. To lose the doll is a very bad omen. If, however, a child is not soon forthcoming, more cajoling of the Spirit of Maternity is necessary. This spirit is supposed to dwell in a swamp at Butha-Buthe (3).

"At Butha-Buthe, in the North, there is a piece of swampy ground which, to the ordinary observer, merely looks like a good place for ducks and frogs, yet, to the native inhabitants of the district, it is more or less sacred ground, as one spot there is inhabited by a spirit. Some years ago, without any apparent reason, smoke was seen issuing from this "Khapong", as it is called. Consequently it came to be regarded as a spot sacred to the Spirit of Maternity, and hither, from time to time, come old and young with offerings of beadwork, money, food, dolls, etc., hoping thus to propitiate the spirit within, and to receive a favourable answer to their prayers. Women who have no children firmly believe this spirit is able to grant their heart's desire if only they can find favour in his sight. In order that he may see how earnestly they desire a child, they will make either a wooden or clay doll, which they strap on their backs and carry about with them, as they would a living child, for at least six months. At the end of that time, they lay it in the "Khapong" as an offering to the spirit, together with any bangles, beads, or ornaments, or even money, which they can collect. Should no child be born, it is a sign that the woman has not found favour with the spirit yet, so the doll is removed from the "Kaphong" and strapped on the woman's back until the spirit is satisfied, when oh, joy! the longed-for child is born. I know of one case where for five years the woman carried one of these dolls about with her before her petition was granted." This report was made about 1903. While they kept their dolls with them there was another ritual which they performed:

"Every means is taken to bring about the desired event, and this necessitates many visits to the medicine man. What is more, among the lares and penates of every Basuto family there used to be kept a crude doll, and when there were three or four of these despairing women round about, they would come together with their dolls to implore the controller of their destinies to come to their aid, and, hearts on lips sing the 'Song of the Childless Woman'. 'These dolls we nurse in our arms', they cry, 'have lips, but speak not; ears, and hear not; eyes, and see not; and when they lie next us in our blankets at night there is no warmth that answers to the warmth of our bodies. Have pity on our unhappy state. What is the use of a lifeless lump like this? Give us a real child, give us one that speaks, that hears, that sees; one that lies warm to our breasts.' At length they cease their prayers, and their pleading cries give way to strident curses." (1).

The woman sleeps with the doll and never leaves it. The doll is given a name, and should a child arrive, it will be called after the doll (12). When the woman does eventually give birth to a baby the doll is put away with her other possessions, and is often kept as a toy for the child, or otherwise she gives it to children of the *umzi* (homestead) to play with. She

does not depend on a doll for further children, and once she has had a baby the doll has no magical purpose. This was told me by a non-Basuto native, and it is possible that the Basuto woman would keep the doll for the use of her daughter. Thus fig. 8 was still in use in 1943, although the beads seem to suggest that it was made long before.

The fertility or bride-dolls evidently did not always represent a baby. Instead they merely represent a person; sometimes they are just pretty dolls covered with brightly coloured beads, sometimes they are dressed in clothes of traditional style. Some are dressed like boys, some like girls. Of our specimens, four are wearing girls' costume, one is wearing boys' clothes. Among the Basutos, girls were more desired than boys (3) as a girl meant future wealth to the family. All symbolise babies. Our oldest doll represents a bride, being the most detailed in conception and recognisably following a custom in its form of dress. However, it may be that the fertility doll never did take a traditional dress. Specimen 2806, fig. 9, is dressed in a long skin cloak reminiscent of an *Abakhwetha* (boy initiate). The other two older specimens, belonging to the turn of the century, are dressed in no recognisable customary style, and in specimens 2266 and 2355 (figs. 10, 11) one collected as late as 1955, European ideas have without doubt deeply influenced the make of the dolls, which are made on similar principles to European toys. The beads used in the make of these dolls are generally of modern European type. Small opaque beads of about 2 mm. diameter are used in the beadwork covering with slightly larger ones (4 mm. diameter) appearing in the trimmings. Similar tiny transparent beads are used in fig. 7.

Fig. 8 presents some very interesting beads. The large beads, pendant from the fur covering, are wound-type opaque beads, of colours ranging from sky blue, to pale blue, turquoise, and a bluish-green. They are very irregular in size and shape, having a diameter of 7-10 mm., and appearing as globular, somewhat annular, or elliptical verging on cylindrical. Two are double beads, the beads being complete in themselves but still joined, thus having a common perforation. These beads seem old, and are possibly of a type imported by the African Lakes Corporation, and used for barter (11). Many are worn and encrusted over with a sediment which cannot be scratched off without causing the bead to crumble. Many of the beads are streaky in colour, and some cracked. The perforation is regular, not tapering as have the wound-technique beads made in India and so extensively used by the Arabs in slave trading along the East African Coast. They are probably of European manufacture, either Venetian or German. One small red bead is threaded at the end of the strand at the left of fig. 8. This bead has an opaque white core with translucent red surface, and was probably imported from Europe at the end of the nineteenth century. The brass beads around the collar are probably made by the Bantu (6). Fig. 8 was probably made long before 1943 when it was collected, perhaps about 1900.

Specimen 154 A (fig. 4), was made about 1900, mainly out of wood. It is very carefully made to represent a bride in full dress. The body is a slightly tapering log of wood. The head is somewhat rounded. At the base of the neck is carved a peg, which fits into the wooden body. The doll once had a face modelled out of clay, which has dropped off. Remnants of clay fill in the angle between shoulder and neck, and once covered all the wood surfaces, as is shown by scraps of clay on the body. The back of the head is still encrusted with clay into which has been pressed beads threaded together, to form the hair. The back part is of dark blue beads and the front part is of black beads, while a double row of white beads arches over the brow at the edge of the black part, evidently a white chaplet. The wood surfaces are quite smooth, having been shaved by a knife, and are rubbed with red ochre. There is only one ear remaining and this is formed by a blob of clay. The ear is pierced and carries a white bead earring threaded on sinew. The beadwork skirt is worked from top to bottom, with the exception of the rows of beads forming the waistband, and has a cloth backing. It is edged with larger white beads at the bottom. The motifs on the skirt are variations of an

old Basuto symbol—a square with a small square at each corner. This symbol is represented in various forms of rectangles, some bearing two tiny corner-squares. They are worked in traditional Basuto bridal colours—red, orange, blue, yellow and black on a white background. A black and yellow band appears about halfway down the skirt. A coiled wire circlet surrounds the bottom edge. The necklaces and earring are very interesting, being very similar to specimens in the East London Museum which were actually worn by Basuto brides. There are two types of necklace—a bead type, and a grass type which takes two forms. The bead type has a fancy bead in the centre—in this case an elliptical etched blue one—with emanating from each side, three strings of white beads variegated by coloured ones at intervals. Of the grass necklaces, the one around the neck and the centre pendant one are made by coiling grass round a circular grass core, and are decorated with bands of beads at intervals, of white and some coloured beads. The other two necklaces sewn onto the grass neck-ring are hoops of plaited grass. A length of plaited grass is looped several times, and held intact by bands of white beads interspersed with a few coloured beads. The coloured beads are always either red, orange, yellow, blue or black. A single hoop of beads of these colours and white beads, is suspended on a necklace of tiny blue transparent beads. This doll was presented to Mrs. E. Ashburner by a Basuto woman whom she nursed with her first baby. This woman had previously lost several babies, and in gratitude to her nurse she presented her with the doll.

Length of body	10 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.
Diameter at base	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Diameter at shoulders	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Length of head	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Width of head	2 in.
Length of earring	$\frac{3}{8}$ in.
Length of skirt	8 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Length of uncovered body	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Total height of doll	13 in.

Specimen 1140 (fig. 5) is also Basuto, and was made about 1909. It is made out of clay—a cylindrical body with the base hollowed out like a basin, and tapering slightly to the neck. The head and the face are modelled slightly to indicate a nose and ears. The whole specimen is covered with beads, wound round and round the figure on a cloth backing. From the base to the neck the beading in strings has sections of white and of black beads with red "dots" between; the face is worked in red beads, the back of the head and neck in black beads and the top of the head in a black and white bead mixture worked from back to front. Strands of beads 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. long hang down from the crown to the shoulders, half black and half pink or white or orange—a kind of headdress fashionable at present among the Ciskei tribes. At the crown the "headdress" stands upright in a tiara of black bead loops. Short little arms made of cloth wound around with black and white beads, are sewn on near the neck, the hands being worked from back to front. The windings of beads have been disturbed, showing tatters of cloth through the beadwork. The nose and ears protrude slightly and are visible between the rows of beads, otherwise features are blurred by the beadwork. The doll was collected at Ladybrand by Mrs. W. F. Courtenay-Latimer.

Diameter of body	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Diameter of neck	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.
Length of head	1 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.
Length of hair	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Length of arms	2 in.
Height of doll	7 in.

Specimen 3206 (fig. 6) was presented by Mr. and Mrs. V. E. Deary, who procured it

about 1909 from Molteno. Most probably it is Thembu showing some influence from the Basuto in the North. The doll is made of Kaffir Sheeting, completely covered with beadwork with the exception of the head. The shape of the doll is that of a slightly conical cylinder, stuffed, probably with straw or cloth. The wider base of the doll has several rows of large pink and white beads wound around it in such a way that two rows are underneath the doll, holding the base somewhat away from the ground. The cloth of the base is studded with tiny white beads, a thread being sewn in and out of the cloth, each outside stitch holding a bead, forming a spiral to the centre marked by a red bead. The tapering body is covered from the base to the neck of the doll with beautifully executed beadwork, consisting of red, blue, black and yellow triangles in a design resembling a patchwork of triangles fitted one against another, the horizontal borders between patches being divided by borders of white beads. Dispersed in the coloured triangles are a few white beads, resembling spots. This design is very regular. Around the neck is a cluster of white beads sewn on to the edge of the beadwork covering, forming a ruff around the neck. There is above this ruff a single row of beads—white and blue beads threaded alternately with, in front, four larger faceted beads, iridescent, threaded between some tiny red beads. The head, also of stuffed kaffir sheeting, brown with usage, or perhaps stained with ochre, is sewn onto the body, and is spherical. An area somewhat greater than a semi-circle is marked off by a border of white beads, as the face. There are two small white beads sewn to the face as the eyes. Over the rest of the head, at back and sides, are sewn black beads at short intervals apart to represent hair. Issuing from points at the front and back of the doll are the two strands of the necklace. The strand issuing from the front is 8½ in. long and consists of three strings, joining on to a strip of open beadwork, at the end of which is a large loop also done in a delicate beadwork style in white beads, and continuous from the strip. The three strings are similar, having the top inch yellow, then about one inch blue and black, next a red strip, then a shorter black strip, each section divided by white beads. The strand issuing from the back is not similar in colour. The three strands are 23 in. long, joined midway by one large white bead. Two strands leading from this big bead have broken. Beads are in successive sections of white, red, white and blue. In between each section are three beads, either black and yellow or red and yellow. At the extremity is a very large yellow clear glass bead, faceted, about ½ in. long, which served as a button to fasten the necklace around the girl's neck. Also sewn onto the ruff at the back is a double bead loop 3¼ in. long for carrying. A big pink bead sewn on at the ruff has two similar loops of beads issuing from it, i.e. red on one side, white on the other with some mixed beads between each section.

Overall height	6½ in.
Length of body	5½ in.
Greatest diameter of body	2½ in.
Diameter of head	1 in.
Width of neck	1 in.

Specimen 2355 (fig. 7) is a Basuto fertility doll, which shows some European influence, though still wearing native dress. It is a rag doll, made of black stocking, and adopts a sitting position, with its legs straight out in front of it. The doll represents a little girl, much like a European toy. The legs and arms are given shape by the amount of stuffing in them, helped by a couple of stitches catching in the arms at the elbow. Hands and feet are formed by a cotton thread wound around the stuffed limbs. Toes and fingers are neatly worked by cotton oversewing stitches. The arms are sewn on to the sturdy body. The head is separated from the shoulders by a cotton thread wound around the stuffing to form a neck. A red embroidered mouth, a bump of a nose formed by a lucky bean under the cloth, and two big eyes made of white cloth-covered buttons with a big black shoe button on top, form the features of the face. One brass ring earring is still sewn to the side of the head. The doll wears a hat woven

from grass in a European sunhat fashion, with an orange embroidery cotton cord sewn around the crown, and a little skirt woven in a similar way from grass. A string of multicoloured beads is threaded round the neck, both arms and both legs. Also around the neck are two wire circlets, both of coiled wire, one with brass bands clamped around it at intervals. Multicoloured beads threaded on a wire, with a large yellow bead in front, form another necklace. It was donated to the Museum as a fertility doll by Mrs. I. J. Gibbs in 1955, but it was collected about 1925 when her husband was resident Magistrate in Basutoland.

Length of legs	4 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.
Length of arms	3 in.
Width of head	2 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.
Height	7 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.

Specimen 2807 (fig. 8) was collected by Dr. J. Denfield at Quthing in Basutoland in 1943. The body is cylindrical, tapering slightly from the base to the neck, the clay being sloped backwards to form the head, with no break between the neck and chin. The face is roughly shaped, in fact misshapen. A hole is the mouth, two little holes are the nostrils, and against each side of the little bump in front which forms the nose is a lucky bean eye pressed into the clay. In the front of the head are two little flaps of clay with a hole in each, which are presumably the ears. On the top of the head is the hair, represented by light blue beads stuck into the clay. A tassel of red-ochred threads hangs from the crown to the neck. The head is stained with red ochre, and the body is sewn up with sinew thread into a piece of skin. In front, covering this like an apron, is sewn a piece of furry pelt, on a band of skin which is wrapped around the body and sewn firmly in place. Five strands of big blue beads with black beans between, dangle down the fur.

A cloak, probably made of Jackal skin, is tied on at the neck, and brass beads are sewn around the edge at the back. The cloak consists of strips of skin, the pieces placed together so as to form a striped cloak, and oversewn with sinew (6). The edge is folded back like a collar. Bending back the top edge of the pelt cloak (kaross) to form a collar, was a favourite way of wearing a kaross by the Sotho-Tswana peoples (6). From this brass bead border hang five strands of blue beads with a few black seeds, also a 4 in. tuft of white fur. Tied by sinew around the neck is a shrunken paw of a Cape Polecat (*iqaga*) and a small tuft of fur. Both hang over the chest. Perhaps the tufts of fur represent animal tails, which used to be fashionable cloak adornments in 1822 (14). The polecat paw must be an amulet, probably intended to imbue the child with some virtue possessed by the animal (2). This doll is evidently wearing a kaross and a long skin apron (*Thetho*) still worn by the Sotho-Tswana tribes in the Transvaal and Bechuanaland (8), but they are put on with the attractive hairy side outermost, while traditionally the hairy side is worn to the inside, though indeed the kaross is sometimes worn hairy side outermost (8) though this may be due to the photographer's persuasion. The kaross was decorated with buttons, bits of brass or any ornament procurable by the Kaffirs (9). This example of Basuto kaross seems to show ideas of both tribes, having coarse brass beads around the collar and rows of beads and beans down the back, a fashionable way of arranging cloak ornaments among the Kaffirs of Barrow's day. The kaross and *thetho* are worn by married women and perhaps the doll thus indicates the new status of the bride. The strands which hang down to the shoulders of this specimen are perhaps meant to represent the twined strands of hair, after a fashion reminiscent of that of Burchell's day (14). Such headdress is not at present usual among the Sotho tribes.

Height	5 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.
Diameter of base	2 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.
Circumference of neck	4 in.
Length of thread tassel	1 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.

Length of fur apron	..	..	..	5 in.
Length of bead dangles	..	..	..	3½ in.
Length of fur tuft	..	..	..	4 in.
Length of necklace	..	..	..	2¼ in.

Specimen 2806 (fig. 9) is a fairly modern fertility doll from Basutoland and is made from clay. The cylindrical clay body is 1½ in. in diameter at the base and tapers to the neck. The head is thrown back, modelled quite realistically out of the clay. A hole represents the mouth, while the nose and forehead are lumps on the face. There are tiny holes for nostrils and white beads pushed into the face for eyes. Little flaps set on the side of the head, are ears. On the top of the head are white and blue beads for hair, a strip of white in front and of blue behind. The back of the head is made up of threads matted hard with red clay. The whole face is rubbed with red ochre. The body is wrapped around in a piece of skin which is sewn up with sinew. A piece of string, stained with red ochre, is wrapped around the doll's neck. It was collected by Dr. J. Denfield at Quthing in 1947.

Height	..	..	..	5½ in.
Diameter of base	..	..	..	1⅞ in.
Length of face	..	..	..	1½ in.
Length of cloak	..	..	..	4½ in.

A modern type of fertility doll, *Specimen 2805* (fig. 10) collected with the doll described above, is made out of the fibrous outer-scale leaves of an amaryllis bulb. A hank of these fibres is bent double, the rounded folded end then becoming the head of the doll, while the flaring loose ends become the skirt. A black and a white bead are sewn on the head for each eye, strands of blue, pink, green and navy beads are sewn on in a haphazard way as hair. To indicate the neck are two rows of blue beads. The torso is indicated by a band of multi-coloured lace beadwork, the beads being threaded to form diamond-shaped outlines rather like muslin or diamond mesh netting. The predominant colour is green, with lines of navy or blue running through it, and dots of red, white, or pink in the pattern. A row of pink beads denotes the end of the bodice. The fibres form a thick skirt flaring out beneath this band of beadwork. A thread is tied around the doll's waist, from which hang, at intervals, strands of the fibrous material, tipped with white beads, which are kept on by a knot at the end of the fibre.

Height	..	..	..	5½ in.
Length of bodice	..	..	..	2¼ in.
Length of skirt	..	..	..	2½ in.

Specimen 2266 (fig. 11) was used recently in Basutoland and shows European influence. A black wooden doll with movable arms and legs, it is in every detail of clothing an exact miniature of a little Bantu girl, and is skilfully carved out of wood. The whole doll is coated over with black boot polish. Although the doll is similar in make to European dolls, the physique of the doll is Bantu—for example it has the typical distended abdomen of native children, and the features of the face are unmistakably Bantu—the bulging forehead, the indentation between the eyes, the wide nose and slight prognathism. The hair is also carved out of wood, incised lines running downwards from the crown in a sharply marked hemisphere at the back of the head. The arms are carved in a bent position, the fingers particularly being very carefully carved. They are nailed on to the body, loosely, so that they are movable. The legs are also carefully carved and cleverly fitted onto the body. The loins are carved like a rectangular block beneath the stomach, and the thighs have a wedge of wood cut away on the inside so that they fit against the rectangular part. A piece of stout wire is passed from the side of one thigh right through the rectangular part and out at the other thigh. The legs are also thus movable. Around one wrist, both ankles and both knees, are single strings

of white beads. Around the hips is a string of blue and yellow beads, and a thread fibre skirt (*tetana*), an exact miniature of those actually used. A yellow or blue bead tips the threads of the skirt, which are knotted at the ends. Around the thick short neck is a necklace of big red beads and *Erythrina* seeds, another of diamond-cut red beads between small white ones, and a third necklace of iridescent blue beads between a few tiny red and yellow beads hanging over the chest. A bead pendant hangs from this—a loop of white beads, with green, red and yellow beads interspersed, and at the bottom two little loops of white beads. From the ears hang different earrings. On the one is a loop of transparent beads with one green bead and beneath it a tiny loop of white beads. On the other ear is a loop of white beads with one blue bead. These loops of beads are threaded on cotton, and are hung on fine wire loops piercing the earlobes. It was presented by Mrs. M. Eckley in 1954, having been collected at Fouriesburg as a fertility doll.

Height	..	..	..	..	13½ in.
Width of head	..	..	..	..	2½ in.
Length of head	..	..	..	..	2½ in.
Length of arms	..	..	..	..	5½ in.
Length of legs	..	..	..	..	7 in.
Length of titani	..	..	..	..	2½ in.

Calling-the-Baby-Dolls

These dolls are charms which are very rarely seen today, and are utilised by women who have proven barren. A model of a baby carved out of wood is placed on the roof of her hut by a witch-doctor. They refer to this as "calling-the-baby" as though they were appealing to the ancestor spirits (*iminyanya*) to send a baby to that house. The custom is fast dying out. The specimen in the East London Museum was collected by Dr. Mima Trollip, who attended a woman near Idutywa who for years had been barren. The doll was carved by a friend of the woman's husband, and placed on her hut by a witchdoctor, and was later given to Dr. Trollip for attending her, about 1939. This is a custom which was common among the Xesibe (a tribe closely related to the Pondo, also of Ambo stock) as late as 1944, when three wooden dolls, highly polished and of dark wood, were seen by Miss M. Courtenay-Latimer on the apices of the owners' huts. These dolls have a very tenuous life, being placed on the hut until the baby arrives, and then burned and buried with the afterbirth and any soiled clothes. Thus they are almost unprocurable by Museums, except under very unusual circumstances. This custom of the Nguni tribes is not the same as the related Basuto fertility custom. It is not carried by a bride, and not made before the wedding. It is only made after the woman has proven barren. The information concerning this custom was given by the people practising it.

Specimen 2969 (fig. 12) is the statuette of a little boy on a pedestal, carved out of a log of stinkwood and highly polished, the pedestal being a somewhat uneven cylinder. The head is heavy for the body, is almost perfectly spherical and thrust forward. On this ball-like head the ears are carved out at the sides—they are round and raised from the head at the back. The features are set close together at the front, within an area of about 2 in. long by 2¼ in. wide. There is some indentation to indicate a prognathous mouth, and the hollows around the nose. The eyebrow is indicated by sharp indentation above the eye, sloping outwards again in the eyelid, to the long hollows which are the eyes. The nose is straight and rounded over the bridge, and the mouth is another long hollow. Although the back of the head is almost in a line with the back, the chin, which is but slightly marked, juts out 1½ in. from the chest. The body is only 2 in. through the middle, in comparison to the 4 in. thickness of the head. The body gently increases its girth from the neck downward. The shoulders are not distinct, for the figure has only a little lump on each side of its body for arms. The buttocks are not accentuated, but the penis is carefully carved. The legs are shaped,

but are out of proportion, being quite narrow at the thigh, increasing in width to the knee. At the calf the leg is $2\frac{5}{8}$ in. wide, tapering to the ankle. The feet are joined. The legs are slightly apart.

Height	..	..	..	..	32 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.
Height of pedestal	..	..	..	..	7 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.
Width of pedestal	..	..	..	..	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Length of head	..	..	..	..	4 in.
Width of head	..	..	..	..	3 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.
Width of body	..	..	..	..	2 in.
Width of hips	..	..	..	..	4 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.
Width of thighs	..	..	..	..	2 in.
Width of knee	..	..	..	..	2 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.
Width of feet	..	..	..	..	3 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.

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